

March 2017

Glimpses of Faith Newsletter

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Lent begins with a recognition of our mortality and creature-hood "dust you are and to dust you shall return". Lent ends with a celebration of Jesus' resurrection and hope for living the "kingdom life" in this life and the next.



Along the way we engage in various disciplines. Hence the question, "What are you doing for Lent this year?" I've started my annual Lenten diet. Yes, I do it for weight management but it is also an exercise in self discipline. Money saved on not buying ice-cream, snacks, deserts, etc. can be used for mission giving. Others might reduce or give up watching TV or social media. Something came my way on facebook suggesting people go through their closets, garages, attics, etc. and find something to give away each day. These items can be given to thrift stores or to help somebody else. This exercise will also help de-clutter your house and simplify your life!

Lent is also a good time to "add" things instead of "giving up" things. It is a good time to pray more, read more, serve more or try something new. Rev. Helen Boursier is offering "Art as a way of listening" on Wednesday mornings at Eden Hill and Tuesday nights at her house. You can read more about this in an article later in this newsletter.

As I've talked about "what we are doing for Lent", what we are adding or subtracting, it has occurred to me that these spiritual disciplines often not only help us but also others and the world! They also not only help us understand ourselves and others better but they can draw us closer to God. There is message here I think! Spiritual disciplines can often be "good" all the way around!

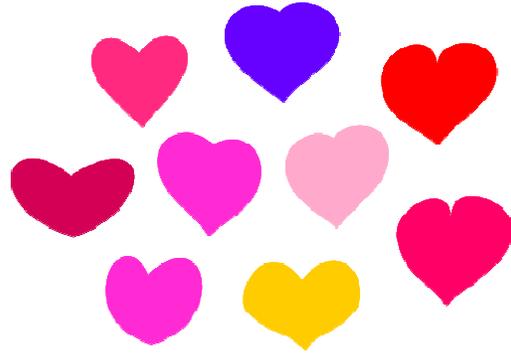
It reminds me of Jesus' distillation of the entire Jewish torah "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind and with all your heart and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." It is all tied together! It is a complete spiritual ecology and web of life and blessing. Blessings on all of you on your Lenten journey!

Grace and Peace, Pastor Scott

Heart of Texas Association Spring Meeting set for April 23, 2017

*By Janet M. Sherman, L.M., Moderator,
Heart of Texas Association*

The Spring Meeting of the Heart of Texas Association is set for Sunday, April 23, beginning at 3:30 p.m. (Registration begins at 3 p.m.) at Faith Church -- New Braunfels.



Please join in the Association meeting as we worship, learn, do the business of the Association, and break bread together... (close with a meal – free will offering gratefully accepted)

Faith Church members are asked to save the date! There are a number of “jobs” you can assist with that will make the meeting a great success! There will be sign-up sheets in the narthex in a couple of weeks or so; tasks needing to be completed are bringing refreshments for during registration (narthex), set up in sanctuary for meeting; set up in Baese Hall for dinner, Helping get dinner out onto serving tables, possibly making tea for dinner. Please consider taking on a task on April 23. We're not quite ready to announce the content of the program, but we should soon!

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Janet Sherman or Pastor Scott. Please rsvp to Pastor Janet, HoT Moderator, by April 10 via e-mail at cmonroe52@gmail.com or 210-393-9633.

Looking forward seeing you on April 23!

Bunco Fellowship Night at Faith UCC on Friday, April 7 at 6:30 p.m.



April Adult Fellowship Opportunity--Join us for a night of fellowship and Bunco on Friday, April 7, at 6:30 p.m. at the church! Bunco is a fun, exciting game and easy to learn. No experience is required. We'll have a **potluck sandwich supper**. Please bring your favorite

sandwiches, chips, or dessert to share. Drinks will be provided. Each player should bring \$5 for cash prizes for the winners--most games won, most games lost, most buncos, most snake eyes, and last bunco. Please sign up in the narthex. For more information contact **Dan or Vicky Geisler at 817-925-3222**.



LEAP will meet on Tuesday, March 21st at 6:30 p.m. We will review where we are and how to get the word out to find new students.

Coloring Books and Cookies Needed!

“Art Inside Karnes” has reshaped itself with immigrant women and children seeking asylum *outside* Karnes. Specifically, Helen Boursier will be going once a month to the Greyhound bus station in downtown San Antonio to do art with the kids and to show solidarity and pastoral presence with the mothers. It would be wonderful to offer the kids a coloring book and small box of crayons plus some homemade cookies in a “to-go” baggie for the long bus ride(s) before them. There are plenty of crayons on hand from the previous ministry, but no coloring books or cookies. If you would like to help with the (revised format) and you are a “baker” it would be an excellent help if you would make simple drop cookies that can be frozen ahead and used as needed. Coloring books will be collected ongoing. If you have any questions, email Helen at helenb@boursier.us Thank you for your prayers, presence, and encouraging words.

Helen Boursier, Ph.D.

Practical Theologian & Missiologist

Ordained Presbyterian Minister

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Welcome Back, Larissa Hunley!

We join the youngest among our congregation in celebrating the return of Larissa Hunley as our Nursery Caregiver on Sunday mornings. Parents of young children under 4 years of age will be able to worship in the sanctuary knowing their little ones will be with Larissa each Sunday. Her love of children is evident in the ways she makes them feel welcome and cherished.

We are grateful for the many times our older youth have been willing to volunteer their time when available in the nursery during the time Larissa was a college student on campus away from New Braunfels. We anticipate the willingness of these young members to provide assistance for Larissa as extra helpers in the nursery on a rotating basis.

Please join the Christian Ed committee and the Church Council members in welcoming Larissa as an essential participant in our congregation's ministry.

Church School Schedule for March

Following Sunday, March 5, there will be a Spring Break schedule for Church School as it is also observed by our public school system. **Sunday, March 12 and 19 there will be no church school classes.** This schedule will provide an opportunity for the children to remain in the sanctuary during the church service. **Church School classes will resume on March 26.** We continue to be most grateful for the volunteer teachers who give guidance and leadership each Sunday as they make possible this aspect of our Christian Education program at Faith Church.



Are You Interested in Photography?

Mike Ziegler and Kathy Howle would like to start a photographer's group at Faith Church. The group would meet regularly and discuss photography, learn about our cameras, talk about various specialties in photography, and possibly take field trips around the area to sharpen our photo skills. Anyone interested please speak to Mike or Kathy at church or email Mike at mzieglertx@yahoo.com.

In Faith, Mike Ziegler

March Birthdays

3-5 Fischer Roland Marlow

3-7 Curt Leonhardt

3-8 Lucile Marburger

3-15 Ralph Ludwig

3-22 Jennifer Marlow

If your birthday is not on here please let Pastor Scott know.





Heart of Texas Association News

On February 15th and 16th, ministers from our Conference met at Slumber Falls for our annual **clergy retreat**, led by Designated Conference Minister Don Longbottom. It was the largest clergy gathering in a long time -- we had about 60 clergy there, including many from the Heart of Texas Association. Our time included quiet meditation and group sharing about scripture passages, worship, and focused discussion about how our churches, Associations, and Conference can live more vibrant and faithful in our lives together. Led by Don Longbottom, we focused on the importance of building the spiritual lives and discipleship of our leaders and congregations, of each church finding its particular mission and calling in the service of others and in the work for justice, and of the work together of starting and supporting new UCC churches. We talked about the life-giving importance for our way of following Christ of practices like going on the Walk to Emmaus, the Journey, and other intentional faith enriching experiences, and we talked about new ways of being the church. Our time together was creative and inspiring. I hope that much of the grace and inspiration of this gathering will flow to all of our churches as we seek who God calls us to be and become.

As we have churches beginning and growing in this Association, we know we also have churches that come to the end of their lives together. **On Sunday, February 26th, St. Paul United Church in Lockhart will hold its final worship service. St. Paul began its ministry in 1913**, took its current name of St. Paul United Church of Christ at the time of the merger that formed the UCC (changing its name from Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church), and built its current 12 sided building in 1964. Pastor Carlson Jakubik has served St. Paul's faithfully since 2010, after serving Umland and leading worship in several churches in the former South Texas and Brazos Associations. Don Longbottom will preach at the closing St. Paul worship. Our prayers go with the people of St. Paul and with Carlson in this time of closure. We give thanks for their ministry and for Carlson's. Carlson lives and is active in study and worship at EdenHill Communities in New Braunfels, and would love to find preaching opportunities in driving distance of his home.

Finally, here is a reminder that our spring Heart of Texas Association meeting is coming up on Sunday, April 23rd, at Faith UCC in New Braunfels. Registration is at 3:00 pm and the meeting is from 3:30 through dinner. Plans are in the works for the agenda, worship, and program, and will be shared soon. Come to be part of the life of our churches together, for good fellowship, and for worship. We hope you will plan to join us!

Blessings in Christ, Liz Nash, Association Minister

Art as a Way of Listening: A (Mixed Media Spiritual) Practice for Lent

**10 a.m. Wednesdays at Eden Hill [all welcome]
Tuesdays 6:30-8 p.m. Open Studio at Casa de Boursier [RSVP required]**

Art as a Way of Listening is a spiritual practice which combines mixed media art with journaling as a pathway for listening to God. Learn how to combine mixed media art with visual journaling during an innovative process which integrates the traditional spiritual disciplines of Lent with artful reflection.

Each of the six sessions focuses on a particular Lenten spiritual theme (Prayer, Gratitude, Simplicity, Confession, Service, Forgiveness, and Hope). Participants will use meditation and guided reflection together with diverse art materials to create a personal spiritual expression of the Lenten themes. *Art as a Way of Listening* is a contemplative spiritual practice which is about process and not the quality of the end product. No art experience required, and all art materials will be provided. Participants should bring their art or prayer journal, or they may do the guided art meditations on plain paper (provided).



Lent begins Wednesday, March 1st, and the six-week series launches the following week and concludes during Holy Week. **The 90-minute sessions are being offered at two locations:**

- 1. 10-11:30 a.m. Wednesdays at Eden Hill starting March 8th and also**
- 2. 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesdays in the "Open Studio" format at the lead facilitator's personal art studio ("Casa de Mike & Helen Boursier" located off FM 1102; 4 miles north of FM 306).**

Everyone is welcome to attend the Eden Hill option. However, the capacity limit for the Open Studio format is eight persons and requires an RSVP. If you are interested in participating in either context, contact Helen at helenb@boursier.us or (830) 730-3202.

The facilitators are Rev. Dr. Helen Boursier, Ph.D., and Rev. Sabrina Jennings who combine their love of mixed media art with theological reflection to create a unique spiritual practice of visual journaling. Both have facilitated art as a spiritual practice in diverse ministry contexts including inside an immigrant family detention center, at a shelter for at-risk teens, with 12-step recovery groups, and with grief groups. Helen is a retired Presbyterian (PCUSA) minister who currently teaches religious and theological studies online at University of St. Mary in Leavenworth, KS and College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, MN. Prior to being called to ordained ministry, she was a professional photographer and mixed media artist for 25 years. Sabrina is an ordained UCC minister who currently works as a community organizer for Corridor Interfaith Alliance for Families.



Journal Art by Sabrina



Journal Art by Helen

Invitation to the Lenten discipline through a contemplative integration of mixed media with reflection. **No art experience required---the mixed media art reflection is about process not end product.**

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering March 26th

Just as you did it to the one of least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. Matthew 25:40

PAUL'S LETTERS REMIND US that as members of the church, we are so closely connected that we can think of ourselves as parts of one body. The New Testament constantly refers to followers of Jesus, not as Christians, but as a family—brothers and sisters.

Many churches live this out when someone is ill, mourning, or facing a crisis. You show up. You are there for your loved ones in need. You show that love in tangible ways, with casseroles and cards, hugs, and spoken words of prayer. These acts of kindness let your brothers and sisters in Christ know that you are present with them. They know they are not alone because you are beside them.

They know that they are not forgotten in their times of trouble. When someone you care about suffers—all your truest words and most loving actions simply declare: “I am here.”

The Bible tells us that God is like us in this respect. When one of God's beloved children suffers, God declares, “I am here.” God hears the cries of the poor and oppressed (Exodus 3:9, Psalm 10:17, 69:33), is near to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18), and is near to all who call God's name (Psalm 145:18). The promise that God will be with us is a constant refrain from Genesis to Revelation.

When we see the latest tragedy on the news, we might ask, “Where are you, God?” But we already know the answer— God is here, in the midst of those who are hurting.

When Jesus tells the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31–40), he reveals to us a mystery. God is most tangibly present in this world where people hunger, thirst, lack adequate clothing and shelter, and are sick or imprisoned. Christ cares for people who suffer and says He is so present in them that when you feed the hungry, care for the sick, welcome the stranger— you feed, and care for, and welcome Christ.

Not just your fellow Christians, but anyone in need, anywhere in the world—these are your sisters, your brothers, your children. Their needs might seem different than the people you worship with on Sunday, but your tangible gifts declare the same message: “I am here.” By reaching out to those who suffer from natural disasters, war, or systemic poverty, you let them know that they are not forgotten. Even when the need seems far from here, by acting together as the body of Christ, we are able to be there for members of Christ's family.

We are there through providing well pumps for clean water, seeds and training for sustainable agriculture, and rice and oil to provide nourishment and cooking supplies. We are there through medical kits, school supplies, temporary shelters, and safe housing projects where needed most.



March Church Calendar

- 3/5 Worship 10:30 a.m. Confirmation Noon - 2 p.m. (Helen Boursier)
 - 3/6 Choir Practice 7-8 pm.
 - 3/7 Art as Listening 6:30-8 pm. Helen Boursier's house RSVP
 - 3/8 Art as Listening 10-11:30 am. at Eden Hill the Pinnacle (open to all)
 - 3/12 Worship 10:30 a.m. Confirmation Noon - 2 p.m.
 - 3/13 Choir Practice 7-8 p.m.
 - 3/14 Art as Listening 6:30-8 p.m. Helen Boursier's house RSVP
 - 3/15 Art as Listening 10-11:30 am. at Eden Hill the Pinnacle (open to all)
 - 3/17 SOS Food Bank 1-4 p.m.
 - 3/19 Worship 10:30 a.m. & Confirmation Noon-2 p.m.
 - 3/20 Choir 7-8 p.m.
 - 3/21 Art as Listening 6:30-8 p.m. Helen Boursier's house RSVP
LEAP 6:30 p.m.
 - 3/22 Art as Listening 10-11:30 am. at Eden Hill the Pinnacle (open to all)
 - 3/26 Worship 10:30 a.m. & Confirmation Noon-2 p.m.
 - 3/27 Choir 7-8 p.m.
 - 3/28 Art as Listening 6:30-8 pm. Helen Boursier's house RSVP
 - 3/29 Art as Listening 10-11:30 am. at Eden Hill the Pinnacle (open to all)
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Community Groups using the church on a regular basis

Women's Support Group (AA) meets 11a.m. to Noon on Saturdays

Community Chorale practices in our sanctuary 6:30-9 p.m. on Tuesdays

Fit and Fifty Pilates meets Mondays and Fridays 6-7 p.m. in Baese Hall (info Beth Bizer)

Special meetings at Faith Church

CIAF meets at Faith UCC on Tuesday, March 14th (Rev Sabrina Jennings)

Heart of Texas Association Executive Committee meets 10-Noon on March 18th